

February 17, 2022

Testimony on behalf of the Connecticut State Library H.B. No. 5037 (COMM)

I am writing in support of Governor Lamont's budget for the Connecticut State Library. I am relieved the budget maintains funding for the programs and services of the State Library. Over the past decade, the State Library's budget had been cut repeatedly. This has resulted in eliminated positions and reduced the programs and services of the State Library of which public libraries relied. I hope this budget begins the reversal of the decade long cuts and signals a renewal and reinvestment of the vital resource that are libraries.

Over the past two years, public libraries have adapted and risen to the challenges of the pandemic. We have proven vital to the community as we directed patrons to COVID test sites, gotten them vaccine appointments and adjust our services while maintaining the health and safety of our communities. We've expanded access to our services, offering e-books while our buildings were closed, extending Wi-Fi and internet access to our parking lots and developing early childhood literacies by hosting story times online.

As we recover from the pandemic, libraries will continue to serve its communities in new capacities. A concerted reinvestment in library services and funding will help reach everyone in the recovery. Please consider visiting your local library and talking with library users. We have much work to do, I hope you'll join us.

Sincerely,

Sam Lee

Intellectual Freedom Chair, Connecticut Library Association
Tolland, CT Resident